

**TOP SECRET** **SENSITIVE**

8 December 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 8 December 1969

DD/I reported that the present schedule is for the Under Secretaries Committee to meet today, for the NSC to meet on 10 December, and for the Review Group to meet on 11 December on the topic of U. S. policy toward post-deGaulle France.

Godfrey called attention to Joe Alsop's piece in today's Washington Post on infiltration in Vietnam. He then went on to explain our reporting on the number of estimated infiltration groups per day during the past two weeks or so (see Morning Meeting Minutes of 18 November).

Godfrey reported that the Malaysians came upon a Soviet submarine and escorted it out of their waters.

DD/S and the Executive Director briefed on the results of a GSA survey of Government cafeterias and GSI's management of same. After some discussion the Director concurred in the DD/S's suggestion that we commence today to identify possible alternatives to GSI service.

ADD/S&T noted that Duckett saw the Chinese Nationalist Vice Premier on 6 December and is scheduled to see the President on 8 December.

Executive Director noted a request from Charles Sorrels of the Bureau of the Budget for a briefing from NPIC and FMSAC with respect to SS-13's. He explained that it appears Mr. Sorrels is primarily interested in SIGINT and photographic collection efforts and that it is DD/PPB's suggestion that the briefing be a consolidated effort.

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Executive Director mentioned that there is a draft letter presently on the Director's desk to Dr. Kissinger regarding the Bureau of the Budget's cuts in our Fiscal Year 1971 budget.

The Director noted the projected trips to the Mediterranean area of Admiral Anderson, Franklin Lincoln, and Robert Murphy. He then went on to ask that Bross nail down our requirements in support of these trips.

The Director asked the DD/I to review with him the briefing which has been prepared in connection with Vice President Agnew's scheduled visit here tomorrow.

Carver briefed in considerable detail on his recent TDY to Vietnam.



L. K. White



**Joseph Alsop**

## Reported Infiltration by Hanoi May Be Major Test for Nixon

THE HIGHLY ENCOURAGING news brought back to President Nixon by the distinguished British expert on guerrilla fighting, Sir Robert Thompson, was revealed in the last report in this space. But another aspect of the Thompson mission to South Vietnam is also worth stressing at this time.

It is an extraordinary thing, if you stop to think about it, that the President of the United States should have been driven to ask an outsider, however distinguished, for an unbiased progress report on an American war. Yet this, at bottom, is just what happened, because of the conflicts of view, mainly arising from conflicts of bias, among the Americans charged with measuring progress.

This is worth stressing at this time, in turn, because these same conflicts of bias and judgment are again cropping up in another vital area. The question now is not the degree of progress in the South Vietnamese countryside.

Instead, the question is the character of Hanoi's response to the grave threat to the whole Vietcong structure in South Vietnam. The threat to the VC arises, of course, from the progress in the countryside. And the current argument concerns the size and power of the rescue party that Hanoi is sending to help the comrades in the South.

AS ALREADY REPORTED in this space, evidence for an ominously massive increase of North Vietnamese troop movement began to accumulate in mid-November. The indicated rate of movement was about 1,000 men per day, or approximately 30,000 men per month. On past experience of comparably large enemy troop movements, this pointed to a decision in Hanoi to attempt another big offensive spasm.

Inside the administration, the determined advocates of "winding down" the war were at first reduced to consternation by the evidence that the enemy was about to wind it up. But when they regained their breath, they did what is unhappily the usual thing in our government in these circumstances.

They attacked the evidence itself. The estimates of an enemy troop move-

ment had been compiled in precisely the same ways that had proved reliable in the past. But flaws were now found in these ways of compilation. Much lower estimates of troop movement were therefore put forward. And so the President was once again confronted with a sharp conflict as to the most vital facts.

HIS REACTION, sensibly, has been to say, "Let's wait and see." But to begin with, if the President is logical, waiting to see means deferring any final decision on future troop-withdrawal schedules.

When there is a serious possibility that the enemy is pouring new troops into South Vietnam, taking out U.S. troops involves wholly novel risks.

What the President will probably see in the end is just about the kind of inflow of enemy troops that began to be predicted in mid-November. Among the non-wishful, a current movement of 5,000 a week—or just a bit less than 1,000 a day—is regarded as a minimum realistic estimate. And a movement of 10,000 a week is regarded as quite possible.

Those who have seen the way the President has faced up to this grim prospect have been much impressed by his coolness and determination. Greatly reduced enemy infiltration and reduced U.S. casualties were properly mentioned as most hopeful signs in his Nov. 3 speech. And much heavier infiltration must not only upset the troop withdrawal schedules. In the end, it will mean more fighting, with heavier losses.

The President, in his cool way, has faced all that. Besides deciding to "wait and see" for the present, he has therefore apparently taken certain conditional decisions. It can be said on high authority, for instance, that he will promptly make a new report to the country, if the current, still-misty evidence of large enemy troop movements begins to congeal into the hard fact of large troop arrivals.

It can be further said, on the same high authority, that he will not stop there. After reporting to the country, he will do something of a pretty tough nature, to show Hanoi that he means business. Preliminary sig-

nals to this effect should in truth be read into the more and more open and effective attacks on the enemy's Cambodian sanctuaries.

All this was forecast in the warning to the enemy that was also contained in the President's Nov. 3 speech. Before he wrote that speech, he was told that Hanoi would never be able to resist at least one really major test of the stuff the new President is made of. That is what seems to lie ahead. If so, Hanoi will not like the results.

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